SPLOST 2020

Tallassee Connector Shared-Use Path

Total Project Cost:
$9,465,000

Total Operating Cost:
$97,000

Tallassee Connector Shared-Use Path

- 10 ft wide path to extend walking and biking opportunities on Tallassee Road from Mitchell Bridge to Three Oaks Drive
  - the accessibility of biking and walking promotes a more equitable transportation system
- High priority trail in BOTH *Athens in Motion* and the *Greenway Network Plan;* aligns with planned bridge work
- Serves Burney-Harris Lyons; connects to parks; connects areas inside and outside of the loop

SPLOST 2020

Tallassee Connector Shared-Use Path

Strong Community Support

Table 4-14: *Greenway Projects*

ID	NAME	LOW COST	HIGH COST	FROM	TO	LENGTH (MI)
13	Normaltown Connector Greenway	$410,643	$410,643	Old Jefferson Rd/Greenway	Oneta St	0.3
14	Buena Vista Ave/ Nantahala Ext	$396,276	$396,276	Old Jefferson Rd/Greenway	Boulevard	0.3
16	Wilkerson Greenway	$599,592	$599,592	E. Broad St	Williams St Greenway	0.5
22	Brooklyn Middle Creek Greenway	$944,491	$944,491	Baxter St	Normal Ave/Belvoir Hts	0.8
24	Brooklyn Middle Creek Greenway	$977,469	$977,469	Alps Rd/West Lake Rd	Baxter St	0.8
31	Tallasee Rd	$2,363,972	$2,363,972	Tukey Creek Rd	Mitchell Bridge Rd	1.9
32	Tallasee Rd Greenway S.	$3,176,573	$3,176,573	Three Oaks Dr	Turkey Creek Rd	2.6
115	Middle Oconee Greenway	$1,984,323	$1,984,323	Mitchell Bridge Rd	W. Broad St/Atlanta Highway	1.6
116	Brooklyn Creek S.	$1,239,255	$1,239,255	St James St/Devonshire/Somerset	Alps Rd/West Lake Rd	1.0
TOTAL		$12,092,594	$12,092,594			2.9

Tallassee Connector

Athens in Motion

Recommended as a T-SPLOST Project

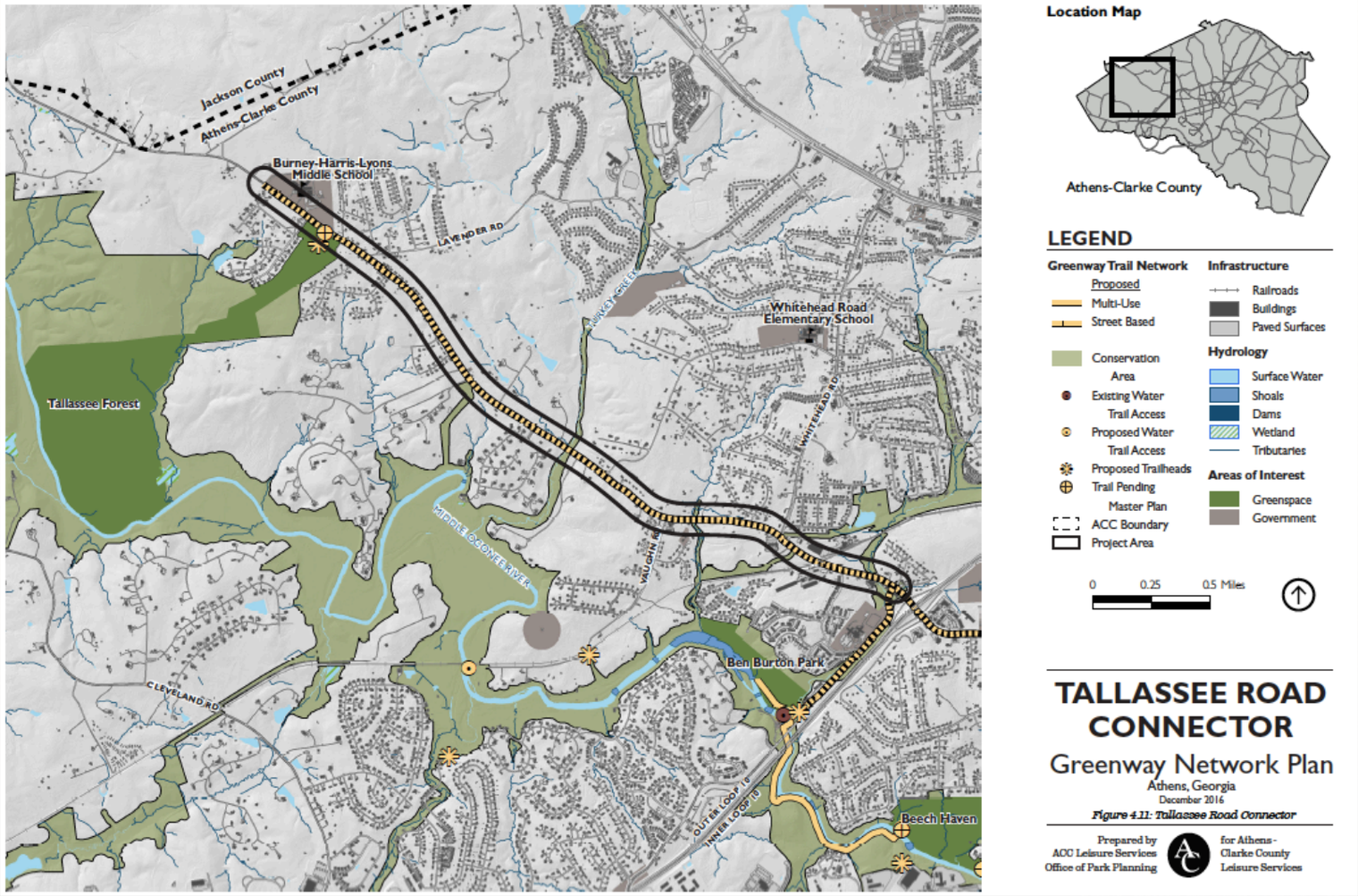
Table 4-1: *Bicycle and Pedestrian Prioritization Criteria*

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	SCORING METRIC	
EQUITY	A variety of factors, shown in the following rows, were considered for the equity prioritization criterion. Each factor was weighted and summed to provide an overall equity score aggregated at the elementary school boundary level. Census data was reviewed using the Athens Wellbeing Project's Social Mapping Atlas.		
Public Sidewalk to Road Ratio	Areas with fewer sidewalks compared to roads are given higher priorities.	• Lowest Ratio = 10 • Low Ratio = 8 • High Ratio = 6 • Highest Ratio = 4	
Bus Service Area Coverage	Areas with more bus service are given higher priority to encourage overall mobility within Athens-Clarke County.	• Highest % = 10 • High % = 8 • Low % = 6 • Lowest % = 4	
Households with No Vehicle	Areas where there are more households without access to personal transportation are given higher priority.	• Highest % = 10 • High % = 8 • Low % = 6 • Lowest % = 4	High = 10 Medium = 7 Low = 5
Population Community by Public Transit	Those who commute by public transit require active transportation infrastructure for first- and last-mile connectivity; districts with more people using transit receive higher priority.	• Highest % Commuting = 10 • High % Commuting = 8 • Low % Commuting = 6 • Lowest % Commuting = 4	
Percent in Poverty Over 65	Those who are in poverty and are over 65 are increasingly vulnerable without means to safe transportation.	• Highest Poverty = 8 • High Poverty = 6 • Low Poverty = 4 • Lowest Poverty = 2	
Percent in Poverty Under 18	Children in poverty are considered a vulnerable population; to provide more access to this population, areas with the highest poverty in those under 18 years old are given higher priority.	• Highest Poverty = 8 • High Poverty = 6 • Low Poverty = 4 • Lowest Poverty = 2	
LAND USE *Parks & Schools*	Parks are destinations for recreation within a community and often attract active transportation users. Additionally, parks are often community assets where residents desire to walk or bike. Educational facilities were included to capture a population that may have less access to a personal vehicle and could benefit from or take advantage of other forms of transportation. Network segments closest to these uses received the highest scores.	1/8 Mile = 10 1/4 Mile = 7 1/2 Mile = 5	
LAND USE *Commercial & High Density Residential*	Properties that were identified as commercial or high density residential land uses were included in the analysis due to opportunity for pedestrian activity from patrons or high number of residents within a walkable scale. Network segments closest to these uses received the highest scores.	1/8 Mile = 8 1/4 Mile = 5 1/2 Mile = 3	

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA (CONTINUED)

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN CRITERIA	DESCRIPTION	SCORING METRIC
TRANSIT	Transit stops provide for local and regional mobility. Access to transit stops is often a key factor for pedestrians and bicycles.	1/8 Mile = 10 1/4 Mile = 7 1/2 Mile = 5
CRITICAL CORRIDORS	Critical corridors are those that connect the core of Athens to destinations outside of Loop 10. These high volume corridors are often the most direct routes in Athens-Clarke County, and they should be considered for bicycle and pedestrian enhancements. Critical corridors include: • Atlanta Highway • Broad Street • Lexington Highway • Prince Avenue • North Avenue • Milledge Avenue	On/Along Corridor = 8 Intersects = 5
PUBLIC INPUT	A robust public outreach process was part of Athens In Motion. Comment density was analyzed to understand areas that received more attention from the public regarding bicycle and pedestrian improvements.	High Density = 10 Medium Density = 7 Low Density = 5



Tallassee Connector

Greenway Network Plan

Tier 1 Priority Project

Topic: TRANSPORTATION	Lead Coordinator	Additional Organizations	Success Measure
TR1. **Support bike and pedestrian infrastructure through respective master plans.** *The Bike Athens' update to its 2001 Bike Master Plan and Community Pedestrian Plan provides a host of improvements to the original document including: a clearer philosophical approach; best-practice designs, low-cost solutions, and perhaps most importantly, an updated list of community-approved priorities. The implementation of the plan's recommendations will be supported through public and private investments.*	ACCGOV Transportation & Public Works- Drew Raessler	Citizens Committee (Tony Eubanks): TSPLOST, SPLOST, Bike Athens (Tyler Dewey), University of Georgia, Oconee Rivers Greenway (Nat Kuykendall), Complete Streets, Rails-to-Trails/Firefly Trail Committee (Andy Herod, Mark Ralston), GDOT, ACCGOV Leisure Services (Kent Kilpatrick), Convention and Visitors' Bureau, City of Winterville, Georgia Bikes (Elliot Caldwell), Pinewoods (Aida), EADC (Trevor Ross), CCSD (Tawanna Mattox), Carol Myers, Athens Area Council on Aging, Multiple Choices, Hope Haven, Georgia Options	• Approval of master plans by November 2018 • Advance four Tier 1 pedestrian projects using TSPLOST funding • Advance four Tier 1 bicycle projects using TSPLOST funding • Advance West Broad Pedestrian Improvements • Creation of an interactive transportation map, to be made available on ACC website • Utilize all relevant planning efforts including the MOVE Athens collaborative to ensure that, whenever possible, transportation planning optimizes the complementary relationship between pedestrian, bicycle, and transit modes. • Create a Vision Zero Action Plan • Implement two greenway projects to increase connections (both to other transit and destinations) • Host Open Streets event promoting movement in ACC • Establish an ACC Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator position supported by a Citizens' Advisory Council • Select and commission design for remaining Tier 1 projects • Complete entire pedestrian network by 2040 • Platinum bicycle friendly community by 2050

Tallassee Connector

Envision Athens

Strong support for trails

Tallassee Connector

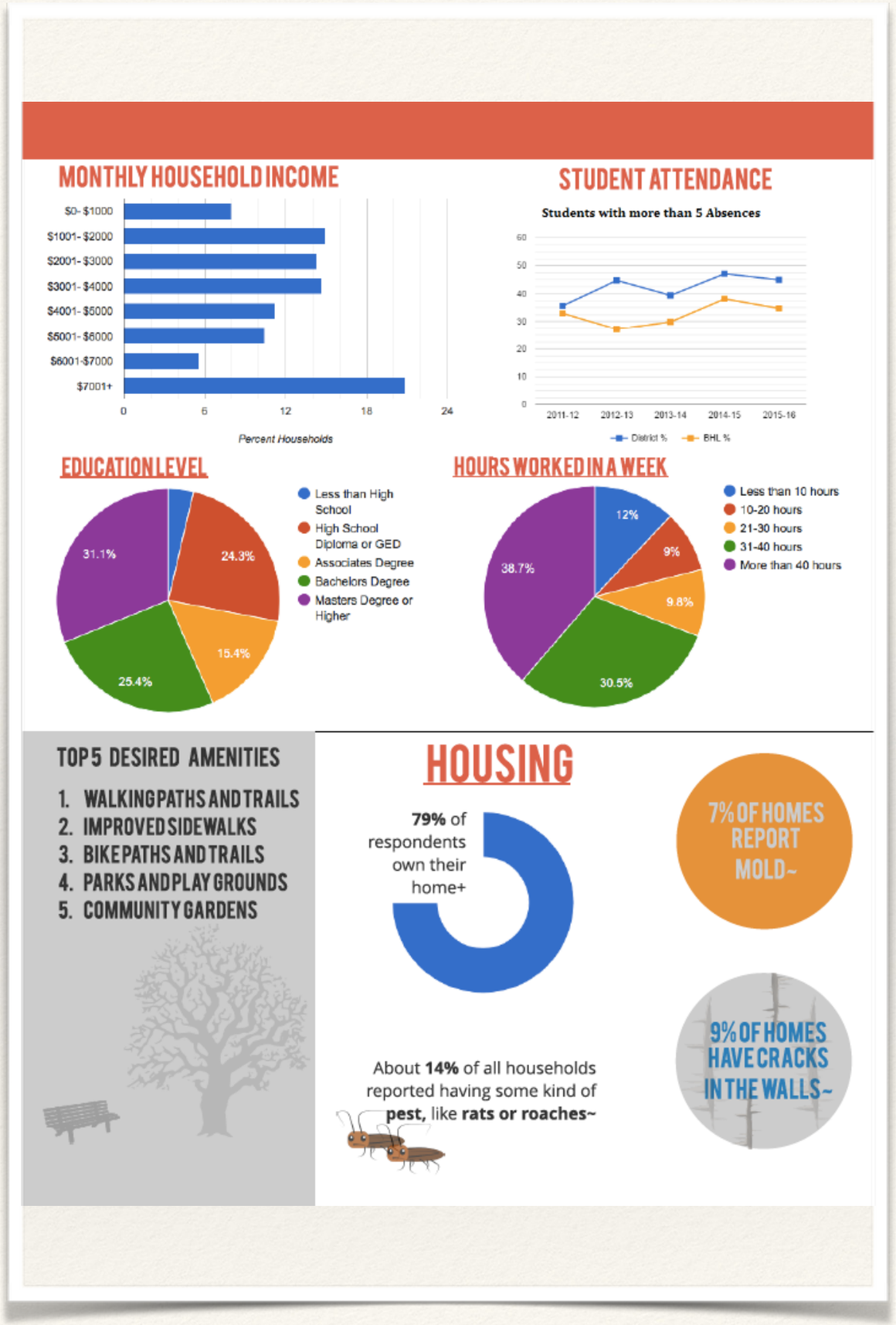
Tallassee Bridge

extends currently in-progress work

Tallassee Connector

Community Priority

The top 3 community desires as reported by the Athens Wellbeing Project all related to better areas to walk and bike (there were 14 choices)



SPLOST 2020

Tallassee Connector Shared-Use Path

Community Benefit

TRAIL USAGE EVALUATION

To understand the scale of economic impact generated by the Silver Comet Trail, it is important to first know trail users and their activity patterns. The trail usage evaluation count and survey explored four key questions:

1. ***How many*** people use the trail and where are they using it most frequently?
2. ***Who*** is using the trail?
3. ***When and how often*** are people using the trail?
4. ***Do people spend money*** in the communities along the trail and if they do, what do they spend their money on?

KEY FINDINGS*

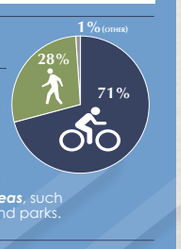
The Silver Comet Trail has an estimated ***1.9 million users*** each year.

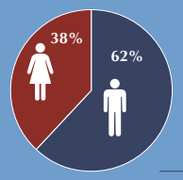
Estimated Usage of the Current Silver Comet Trail, by Major Trailhead

Smyrna Trail Head	Silver Comet Cycles Trail Head	Powder Springs	Hiram Trail Head	Dallas Trail Head	Rambo Trail Head	Rockmart Trail Head	Cedartown Trail Head	GA/AL State Line
434,000	350,000	277,000	270,000	203,000	192,000	90,000	25,000	47,000

Total Users
1,888,000

The ***majority of trail users are bicyclists***, particularly in more remote and rural areas.





More males use the trail than females along every segment of the trail, though the proportion of ***female users is higher in more densely populated and well-trafficked areas***, such as near downtowns and parks.

Smyrna Trail Head had the highest estimated annual trail volume.

97% of people use the trail either for ***recreation or exercise,*** though many people do use the trail for commuting or to access nearby destinations, especially in urban areas.

People visiting the trail traveled from ***23 counties*** and ***8 states***, including Washington State, to use the trail (during the two-week survey period).

When users spend money while using the trail, the majority of them spend money on food and may spend up to $50 per visit.**

**Information was collected via counts and surveys at nine locations using methodology from the National Bicycle and Pedestrian Documentation Project (NBPDP)*

***Field survey participants were asked 'If you do anticipate spending money, what do you estimate your party's overall spending to be during this trip?' This number is conservative and likely to be more than $50 per user for non-resident users.*

ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

This Economic Impact Analysis is the first of its kind to comprehensively report the economic benefits of the existing 61-mile Silver Comet Trail and its proposed 66-mile expansion. Recreational amenities such as rail-trails are increasingly seen as regional economic development tools that generate value through:

- **Recreational spending** (bicycle rentals, food & drink, sporting equipment)
- **Tourism** (spending by out-of-state users on lodging, transportation, dining)
- **Spillover impacts** (additional jobs and worker spending)
- **Fiscal impacts** (sales tax revenue generated)
- **Increased property values** (increased household wealth near SCT)
- **Property tax revenue** (benefitting municipalities and school districts)

Summary of Economic Impacts for Existing and Expanded Silver Comet Trail

	Current Trail Network	Expanded Trail Network
Recreational Spending	$47 Million	$71 Million
Tourism Spending	$10 Million	$15 Million
Regional Spillover	$98 Million	$147 Million
State Spillover Impact	$118 Million	$177 Million
Statewide Fiscal Impact	$4 Million	$5 Million
Property Value Increases	$182 Million	$316 Million
Property Tax Gains	$2 Million	$4 Million
TOTAL	**$461 Million**	**$735 Million**

Source: Econsult Solutions, Inc. (2013)

BENEFIT/COST ANALYSIS

Benefit Valuation of the Silver Comet Trail Expansion: Based on the estimates of the Economic Impact Analysis, ***the 66-mile trail expansion is conservatively expected to generate a combined economic benefit of $274 million***. This includes local, regional, and statewide benefits:

LOCAL

$24 million more in recreational spending and **$5 million** more in tourism spending per year

$130 million more in property value impact and **$1.7 million** in annual property tax revenues to municipalities and school districts

REGIONAL

$50 million more in economic impact each year

400 more jobs

STATEWIDE

$60 million more in economic impact each year

670 more jobs

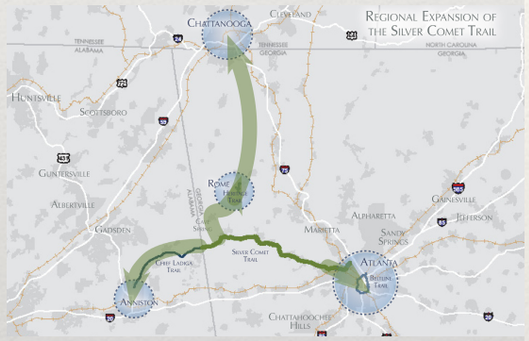
The economic benefits of the Silver Comet Trail expansion will be even greater if this investment catalyzes new development within Northwest Georgia, which would create additional property tax gains and spillover impacts.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

The combined ***cost to construct all recommended trail connections within Georgia is estimated to total $59 million***. An estimate of the return on investment of the Silver Comet Trail expansion can be provided using the results of the existing and proposed economic impact analyses. ***For every $1 spent on the Silver Comet Trail expansion, Georgians gain an estimated $4.64 in direct and indirect economic benefits.*** This translates to an over 400% return on investment for local communities, the region, and the state.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

In 2012, the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (NWGRC) initiated the Silver Comet Economic Impact Analysis and Planning Study to determine the existing and future economic impacts of the Silver Comet Trail (SCT). The SCT is the nation's longest and oldest paved rail-trail, extending 61.5 miles and connecting seven cities and three counties from Smyrna to the Georgia/Alabama state line. NWGRC is exploring a 66-mile expansion within Georgia as well as coordinating with Albama and Tennesee on long-term interstate connections. This in-state expansion alone has the potential to double the number of users and economic benefits on a a local and regional scale.



HISTORY OF THE SILVER COMET TRAIL

In 1992, The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) purchased the inactive rail line through Cobb, Paulding, and Polk counties from CSX. GDOT intended to use the line as a high-speed transit route. Instead the corridor became a shared use, non-motorized trail in 1998. Construction of the trail was initiated through a collaborative effort among GDOT, Georgia State Parks, PATH Foundation, Cobb County DOT, Paulding County, and Polk County.

Tallassee Connector

Economic Impact

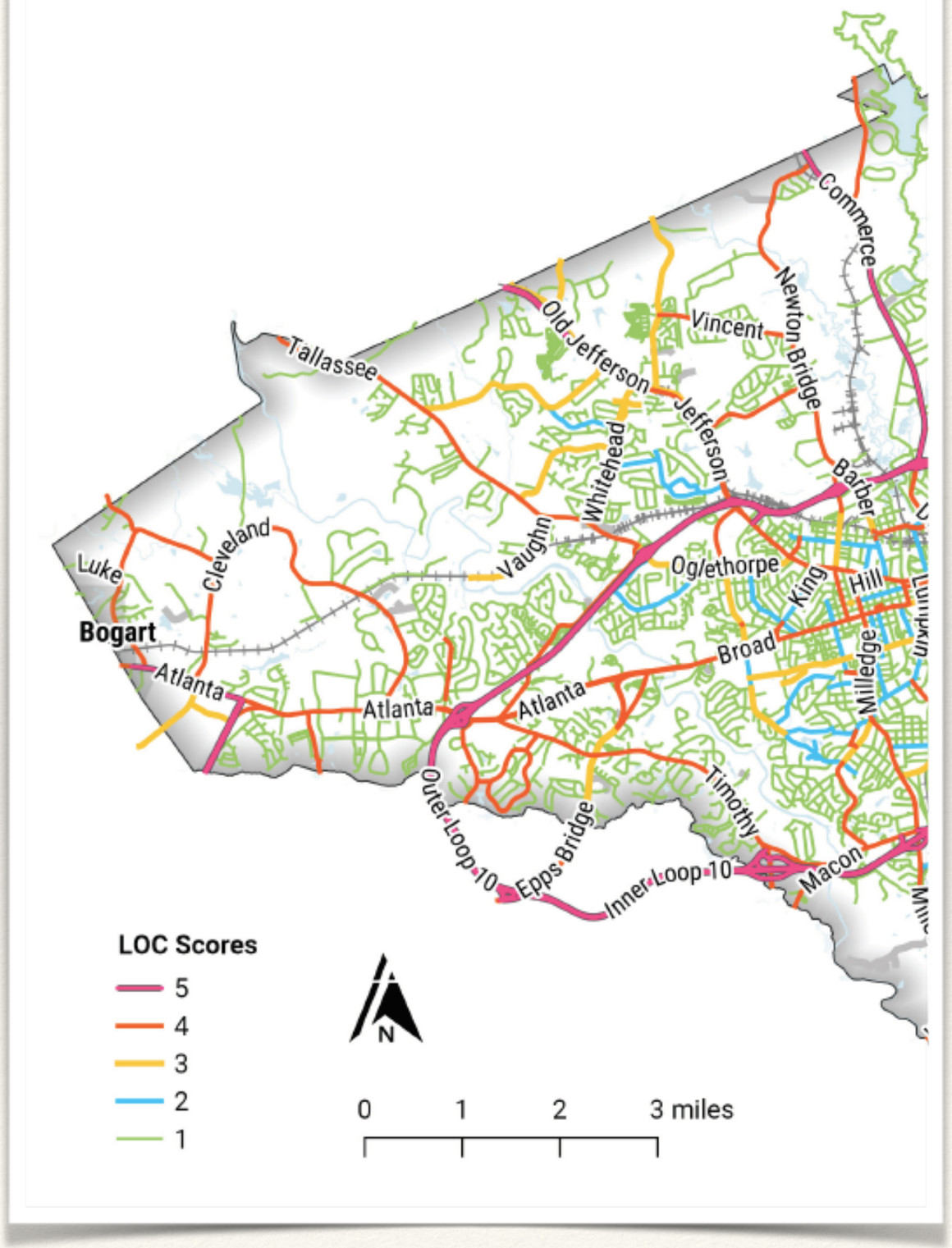
up to 400% return on investment. Trails may bring in $4 for every dollar spent

Tallassee Connector

Safety

Currently, Tallassee has the 2nd highest Level of Comfort score. High scores are bad. Building this path would create a the Level of Comfort of a 1 or 2.

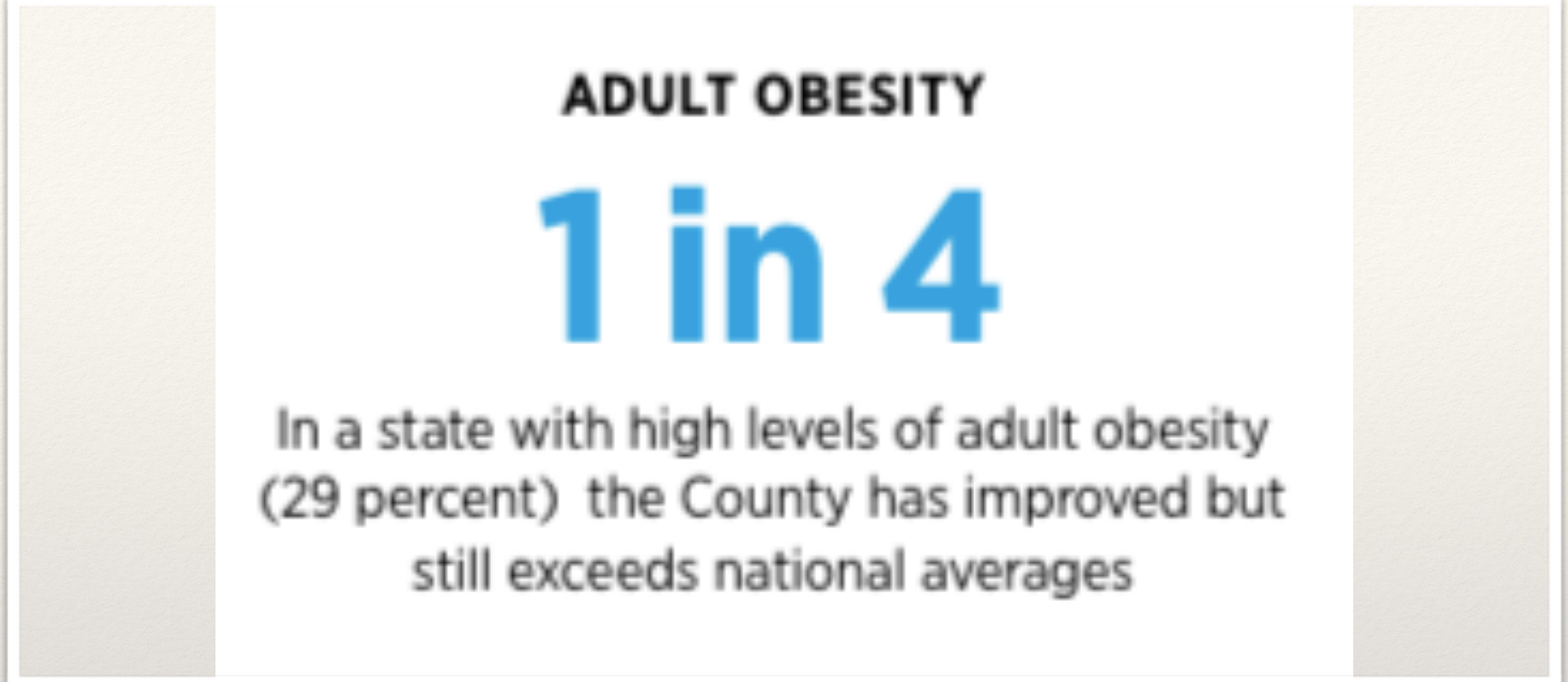
Figure 2-7: *Level of Comfort Results*



Tallassee Connector

Safety

Image via *Envision Athens*



Tallassee Connector

Community Health

Image via *Envision Athens*

Active Transportation and Health

The American Planning Association has identified cycling infrastructure as one of the simplest methods for confronting community health issues like obesity, and inactivity. Athens has an increasing vibrant biking culture and is expanding its bike-specific infrastructure.

Tallassee Connector

Community Health

Walking and biking is good for our health. Image via *Envision Athens*

Equity

- In 2016 it cost, on average $8,558-a-year to own and maintain a car. Similar estimates say a bicycle costs $350-500-a-year. (AARP) Transportation is one of a household's largest expenses
  - Commuting by car costs another $2,600-a-year. (AARP)
- Walking costs a pair of shoes
- Investing in safe places to walk and bike helps those who rely on bikes and their feet to get around Athens.

Tallassee Connector

Costs

Based on the estimates provided by Toole Design as part of the development of *Athens in Motion*.

Tallassee Road Connector

4.5 miles X 10 feet wide	**23760**	**$234 a foot estimated for a 12” wide path.**	
ROW Easement	0	Unknown	
Design Fees	664,865.40	based on SPLOST Formula	
Misc. Fees	166,216.35	based on SPLOST Formula	
FFE	NA		
Construction	5,540,545	Based on Athens in Motion estimates	
Capitol equipment	0	based on SPLOST Formula	
Testing	166,216.35	based on SPLOST Formula	
Other 1	0		
Other 2	**0**		
All other categories automatically calculated			

Shared Use Path 12' wide - Concrete (No Curb and Gutter)				
Includes: removal of existing earth, minimal grading to avoid property acquistion. Four foot buffer if necessary. Prices based on 100' long section on one side of roadway.				
Item	Unit	Quantity	Unit Cost	Total Cost
Earthwork, Fill, Excavation, Grading	CY	10	$19.00	$190
Aggregate Base Course	CY	5	$18.19	$91
Concrete Surface Paving	SY	138	$93.56	$12,911
New Signs (assume 1 per 500')	EA	0	$246.00	$49
Lump Sum Items				
Mobilization	LS	1.00	$1,500.00	$1,500
Landscaping	LS	1.00	$2,000.00	$2,000
Drainage and E&S	LS	1.00	$500.00	$500
Maintenance of Traffic	LS	1.00	$1,000.00	$1,000
Misc. Move mailbox/ signage	LS	1.00	$250.00	$250
Utility Adjustments	LS	1.00	$1,000.00	$1,000
			20% Contingency	$3,898
			Total Estimated Cost	$23,400
			$234.00 Per Foot	

Costs

Cost estimates developed by Toole Design for Athens-Clarke County